



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# News Release

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## VA AND NASA SIGN AGREEMENT FOR VA PATIENT SAFETY REPORTING

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senior officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) signed an agreement today to create a system to report health-care errors and “close calls” in VA health-care facilities.

The agreement commits the two agencies to create a voluntary external patient safety reporting system for VA. That reporting system will be operated by NASA and modeled after the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), which NASA operates for the Federal Aviation Administration.

“This agreement harnesses the expertise of two federal agencies to improve the health care available to our nation’s veterans and, ultimately, to all Americans,” said Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, VA’s Acting Under Secretary for Health, who signed the agreement on behalf of VA.

Dr. Henry McDonald, Director of NASA’s Ames Research Center, signed on behalf of the space agency. Ames Research Center will operate the VA Patient Safety Reporting System under the Memorandum of Agreement between the two agencies.

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“We will use our experience operating the Aviation Safety Reporting System to develop VA’s Patient Safety Reporting System. I am confident that the new system – which will use data reported by health-care providers in the front line of patient safety –

will enable VA to set new standards for patient safety and further improve the quality of health care in this country,” said Dr. McDonald.

VA operates 172 medical centers across the country and last year had more than 3 million patients enrolled in its health-care system. In 1997, VA began consolidating its long-standing patient safety programs and, in 1998, created the National Center for Patient Safety.

Ames Research Center is NASA’s lead center for Information Technology, Aviation Capacity and Aerospace Operation Systems. It has operated the ASRS since it was established in 1976. The system collects aviation operation reports submitted from pilots, air traffic controllers, flight attendants, mechanics and others who are involved in, or observe, an incident or situation which may compromise aviation safety. All submissions are voluntary and held in strict confidence.

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